

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 1-14 are pending, of which claims 1 and 2 are pending. Claims 10-14 have been withdrawn. Claims 1-2 and 6 have been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Support for the amendments is found, for example, at paragraph [0015] of the present application.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because Figure 3C does not include the reference characters not mentioned in the description. Applicants have amended the specification to include the reference number 52 therein. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment made to the specification overcomes this drawing objection.

Objection to the Claims

The Examiner objected to claim 6 because of informalities. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment made to claim 6 overcomes this objection.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Li et al. (USP6,173,755) in view of JP 05-318040 (JP '040). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Regarding claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Li nor JP '040 discloses "*a heat-conductive first layer arranged on the molten liquid side so as to be in contact with the*

molten liquid, comprising a material having a heat conductivity equal to or more than 5 W/mK' as recited by amended claim 1.

First, it is clear that Li fails to disclose the above element of claim 1. In response to the Applicants' amendment and argument filed January 27, 2009, the Examiner asserts that JP '040 discloses the above element of claim 1. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that since the molten metal contacts the metal strip 30 (i.e., alleged first layer) and the cooling roll 14, the metal strip 30 is arranged on the molten liquid side. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of the reference.

Applicants respectfully submit herewith the machine translation of JP '040 together with the figures with English language legends herewith for the Examiner's review. Paragraphs [0013]-[0014] of JP '040 disclose:

[0013] The section structure of the casting nozzle 12 is shown, the ceramic fiber felt layer 20 is stuck on the undersurface of the nozzle tip 24 usually made from refractories, and drawing 3 constitutes the contact surface with the cooling roller 14. This ceramic fiber felt layer 20 does not contact molten metal directly, and the ceramic-bonding layer 28 is formed in that tip part. Although space exists between the ceramic fiber felt layer 20 and the cooling roller 14 in the drawing, actually, after this part has contacted, a seal is made and continuous casting is performed.

[0014] According to this invention, the metal plate 30 intervenes between the ceramic fiber felt layer 20 and the cooling roller 14, and that tip is arranged here so that it may come to a casting nozzle tip and the position which retreated 1-5 mm from the tip part of the ceramic-bonding layer 28 in this case (emphasis added).

It is clear from these paragraphs that the metal strip (plate) 30 is sealed between the felt layer 20 and the cooling roller 14, and does not contact with the molten metal. Also, since "[t]his ceramic fiber felt layer 20 does not contact molten metal directly, and the ceramic-bonding layer 28 is formed in that tip part," it is clear that what is contact with the molten metal is the ceramic-bonding layer 28 in JP '040. **It should be noted that the molten metal is disposed and flows**

on the portion 12b in FIG. 3 of JP '040, NOT between the nozzle 12 and the cooling roll 14
(see, FIG. 2 of JP '040). As such, the metal strip (plate) 30 of JP '040 is not arranged on the molten liquid side so as to be in contact with the molten liquid, as recited by claim 1.

As such, it is clear that, at a minimum, the combination of Li and JP '040 fails to disclose the above identified element of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 and any claim dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1 and all claims dependent thereon.

Regarding claim 2, Applicants have amended claim 2 to recite, similar to claim 1, “*a casting nozzle tip arranged on the molten liquid side so as to be in contact with the molten liquid.*” Accordingly, claim 2 and any claim dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 2 and all claims dependent thereon.

Conclusion

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

McDERMOTT WILL & EMERY LLP



Brian K. Seidleck
Registration No. 51,321

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
Phone: 202.756.8000 BKS:TS:MaM
Facsimile: 202.756.8087
Date: May 19, 2009

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